



Destruction of obsolete pesticides in Africa

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The African Stockpiles Project (ASP) has been initiated to collect and finance the destruction of all obsolete pesticides on the African continent over the next five years. The World Bank is funding the project through various funding resources.

The first phase of the project involves South Africa as one of seven nations in Africa. Within South Africa, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) assisted by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) will be managing the project through the establishment of a project management unit that consists of a project manager from the DEAT, a project officer from the DOA and a technical adviser for the destruction of the pesticides. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UN) supports the development and roll-out of the project. Other participating organisations include CropLife International, CropLife SA, BirdLife SA, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), AgriSA, the Transvaal Agricultural Union and the National African Farmers Union.

The Logistics Staff Council (LSC) approved the implementation of the ASP within the Department of Defence (DOD) in July 2006. The ASP will be managed by the Environmental Services section at the Logistics Division, in conjunction with Dr Gerhard Verdoorn of BirdLife SA in order to effectively and comprehensively ensure the collection of obsolete and outdated pesticides present on

military properties. Obsolete pesticides are products of which the manufacture, formulation, sale and use have been banned, which are no longer of use to the owners thereof and which have expired, especially herbicides.

It includes any product that is or was registered under Act No 36 of 1947 (as indicated on the product label) and any old containers of products that may have been used as pesticides. These containers may be unlabelled or poorly labelled. The main classes of pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and acaricides. Products that are not eligible for inclusion in the project are any fertilizers, lubricants, animal health drugs such as antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, industrial chemicals and any other chemicals that are not considered to be strictly pesticides. Empty containers that contained only pesticides and no lubricants, industrial chemicals and disinfectants are eligible to be included in the project.

Initially the status, type and approximate amount of obsolete pesticides within the DOD were identified and assessed by means of a questionnaire completed by the Officers Commanding (OCs) of military installations. This was necessary in order for the specialist teams from the ASP to compile a comprehensive inventory of all such products present on military sites.



Once the independent inventory has been completed and approved, obsolete stocks will be collected, analysed, safely packaged and eventually destroyed by members of the ASP. There is only one opportunity for military bases and units to get rid of such obsolete pesticides free of charge. In future, national legislation may very well outlaw the keeping or possession of obsolete pesticides.

Therefore, following the completion of the ASP within the DOD, the OCs of bases and units will be accountable for the high costs associated with the collection and destruction of unnecessary stockpiled pesticides by hazardous waste specialists. However, awaiting the completion of the inventory and the collection and destruction of obsolete pesticides, the OCs of bases and units in possession of such materials must ensure correct storage and safeguarding by repackaging leaking containers in leak-proof containers. Empty steel drums or thick plastic bags must be used to ensure that the obsolete pesticides are stored in secure stores to which unauthorised people do not have access.

For more information on this project contact (012) 339 5275 or for advice on pesticides contact the Griffon Poison Information Centre at 082 446 8946. 

